

Phase 3 “Lakes & Ponds” Sewer Project Community Meeting - Tuesday, February 4, 2025  
Nauset Room, Orleans Town Hall – 5:30-7pm  
Notes from Q&A Session Following the Presentation

Note: references to “Town website” generally mean the Wastewater website w/in the Town website.

Responses: RD = Reggie Donoghue, AECOM “Ombudsman”; TH = Tim Harrison, AECOM Project Engineer; KG = Kevin Galligan, Select Board Member and Chair of the Wastewater Management Advisory Committee (WMAC); George Meservey = Town Planning Director; JB = Judith Bruce - WMAC Vice Chair and Cons Comm member; Ginny Farber = member Cons Comm and WMAC and BOWSC Vice Chair; RW = Rich Waldo, Orleans DPW Director; John Nelson = Orleans Sewer Project Coordinator

Question: When Phase 3 begins, what will be the impact to adjacent households during construction? Answer: Septic system will continue to work during construction. When the property is ready to connect to the sewer system, the cutover is scheduled w/ the property owner’s engineer and the sewer system contractor. The actual cutover is very quick.

Question (Constance Kremer): Explain the logic behind excluding certain properties on Monument Road. Answer (TH): System design will enable future connections. Second question: Timeline – how much time to “get ready” before the order to connect? Answer: KG referred to the timeline in the presentation. The “lateral trench confirmation letters” will be sent in spring/early summer 2026. Property owners could start calling contractors then. JB suggested establishing a relationship w/ a contractor even before then.

Question: regarding deadline(s) and timelines. Answer: discussion about Phase 1 communications and timing. Deadline to connect initially set at one year; extended to 2 years. Meanwhile, “everybody’s doing it” – meaning, there are now wastewater projects in several other towns – not just Orleans and Chatham – increasing the competition for engineers and contractors. Some have indicated little success in getting a response from these experts; others indicate that some of these experts have availability. JB – noted that the sooner all are connected, the sooner we can protect our lakes and estuaries. Connecting to the sewer will immediately stop further phosphorous from entering our groundwater.

Question: about costs. This individual had just paid for a natural gas connection and he wondered if the cost w/be similar. How much per foot? Answer: TH – s/be less for sewer. George Meservey, who lives in Chatham, provided his own experience as an example: 260’, down-hill. Whole thing cost \$37k. He also applied for an Aquifund loan: \$150/month to pay it off. Also cost \$2k extra for engineering (not covered by Aquifund).

Observation: Tim Counihan (BOWSC Associate Member) suggested that something s/be said about Betterments – noting especially the potential impact of irrigation during the “3-year water use period” (which starts approximately in mid-2025 per the presentation material). He note that irrigating with tap water typically jacks up the Betterment for a property. He

suggested getting a deduct meter to avoid this problem. Answer: KG – noted that Phase 3 Betterment strategy has not yet been determined. For Phases 1 and 2, project costs are paid 80% on the tax rate and 20% through the Betterment (thus by property owners connected in those phases). Strategy for Phase 3 TBD; likely to be discussed by the WMAC and recommended to the Select Board.

Question: about the map and the hash-marked beige areas. Answer: TH – shading signifies up-gradient from an impacted water body.

Question: (individual lives on the south side of Meetinghouse Pond – in the Tides End area) – Phase 2 Extension? Answer: TH – design is complete; quote received from contractor. Currently checking w/ MA DEP on availability of funding to confirm no additional cost to the Town for this additional work – which w/ probably start in the Fall (2025). TH also referred to MHP 3 (an additional extension) – more communications to come on this work for those living in that area.

Question: about low pressure lines and the need for pumps (even if property owner lives on a hill). Answer: TH – on the map, green lines are low pressure lines; blue lines are gravity lines. Any properties anywhere along a low pressure line will need a pump in order to help move sewage through the collection system. The Town has recommended a standard pump (at a best price), with various sizes, based on need (as determined by engineer). A back-up generator is optional (pump can be tied in to a generator if desired by property owner).

Question (John O’Hanlon on Thayer) – is his property in a to-be-sewered area or not? Answer: TH – that area is the Phase 3 “Bid Alternate Area”. Bids will be received in the Spring of 2026. The Town will decide then whether to include that area in Phase 3 – or not. If not, that area would wait for Phase 6. KG – decision likely will depend on market forces at the time (costs).

Question: about costs – Town vs. property owner costs; extra costs for low pressure areas. Answer: KG – noted availability of Aquifund loans (for those who qualify). Also – septic tax credits for new sewer-related costs once a property owner has been ordered to connect by the Board of Health.

Question: about cost of pumps. Answer: KG – referred to material on Wastewater website. TH noted wide range of pumps available – depending on need (as determined by engineer) – low end is about \$5k.

Question: pump needed if on a low pressure line – or below grade? Answer: yes

Question: confirming map – green lines = low pressure; blue lines = gravity.

Question: financial support? Answer: Aquifund (county program) if property owner qualifies. Also – Orleans Board of Health has some limited funds now – for Phase 1 property owners. For Commercial properties – several local banks are now offering relatively low interest loans.

Question: property owner lives on a hill above Arey's Pond – why would they need a pump when living on a hill? Answer: TH – reference to low pressure pipe network. Design tried to minimize the number of (very costly) pump stations (expensive to build and to maintain). That area is very challenging due topography and number of water bodies.

Question: where does the pump go? Answer: TH – on the property, near the house – underground. KG – picture a “manhole cover” – that’s the approximate size of what would be seen on the surface.

Question: any examples of costs? Answer: KG – individual property owner contracts – private information. JB – Phase 1 information might be very different from Phase 3. Others – however, the Town can try to get a variety of examples w/ enough information to be helpful (reference to George Meservey's personal example).

Question: would like more information about the Bid Alternate Area. Answer: TH – showed the watershed overlay map and noted that watersheds all have different TMDLs – and that watersheds overlap sewer Phases.

Question: how are properties chosen for inclusion in a sewer phase? Answer: several factors, including water use and layout of pipe network – combined w/ watershed info. KG – noted that the Town's Adaptive Management Plan allows us to shift plans if/as needed or appropriate (eg, including the Bid Alternate Area properties in Phase 3 – or Phase 6).

Question (Dan Joslin) – recently installed a new septic system – will that enable him to defer connection to the sewer system? Answer: KG – “rule” allows deferring for 10 years from a new Title 5 installation before the order to connect.

Question: could a Phase 3 property owner finance his costs now – for a connection 5 years from now? Answer: (unlikely). Ginny Farber suggested that neighborhoods could get together and hire a single engineer and contractor – to save time and likely expenses.

Question: about Bid Alternate area and what the Town would achieve by sewerage (now). Answer: TH – Namequoit sub-watershed nitrogen removal goals are predicted to be met with or without the Bid Alternate area being sewerage. If the Town elects to move forward with awarding the Bid Alternate area in Phase 3, it is likely that the Town w/be able to reduce the size of a future sewer service area. JB – some parcels are included because of phosphorous considerations.

Question: diameter of pipe on Route 28? Answer: sizing for future phases, not just Phase 3 needs. Route 28 pipe will eventually carry Phases 5 through 8 as well. Depth to pipe – averages 5'.

Question: how soon can you get Town approval to dig, once you are ordered to connect? Answer: KG - When a property owner is ordered to connect to the sewer system, it is

imperative to engage the services of a [Massachusetts Licensed Professional Engineer](#) who will prepare your sewer connection plans. These plans must be submitted to [AECOM](#), the contracted engineering firm for the Town of Orleans, for thorough review and approval. Subsequently, upon approval of the plans, you will be required to retain the services of a Town of Orleans [approved contractor](#) to undertake the installation of the sewer connection and execute the proper abandonment procedures for the existing septic system.

Question (Sean Antonio X – remote) – looking for map – question about Old Timers. Answer: TH – only the Old Timers parcels adjacent to South Orleans Road are included in the Phase 3 service area.

Question: about the “white” section on the map – the properties NOT included for connecting. Would that mean never? Answer: KG – likely w/be very far out. However – MA DEP requires a back-up plan for the oysters in Lonnie’s Pond. If that project fails then we might need to sewer the properties in the white section on the map.

Question: about the potential impact of climate change on the oyster project. Answer: KG – initial planning for the Lonnie’s Pond project was much more ambitious/extensive; however, it was scaled back considerably in size when it was installed to much more modest acreage and thus perhaps less vulnerable to external factors. JB – noted that impact of acid rain is unpredictable; sewers work.

Question: anticipated impact of Phase 3 on Pleasant Bay? Answer: JB – marshes s/ improve; water quality in Pleasant Bay s/ improve. But there are unknowns – such as climate change.

Observation: Mike Giggey noted that Phase 3 design is a right-sized solution; we’re not over-sewering.

Notes: Lynn Bruneau / WMAC Member / updated 2/20/25

